

**ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP**  
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**Memorandum**

**To: ENRP Co-Chairs Sean O'Connor & Barry Weinstein, MD**

**From: Transportation Subcommittee Member Peter Wendel**

**Re: August & September 2003 meetings**

**Date: September 26, 2003**

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The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership's Transportation Subcommittee met August 22, 2003 at Christino's at the Amherst Marriott, and September 19, 2003 at the Niagara Falls Comfort Inn. Present for the August meeting (a joint meeting with the Economic Development Subcommittee) were subcommittee members Morse, Burmaster, Ferraro, Meckler (proxy), and Wendel, as well as members of the Economic Development Subcommittee, ENRP Co-Chair Barry Weinstein, ENRP Member Laura St. Pierre, and additional representatives from the NFTA and GBNRTC. Present for the September meeting (a joint meeting with the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee) were subcommittee members Morse, Ferraro, Meckler (proxy), and Wendel, as well as members of the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee and additional representatives from NFTA and GBNRTC.

**Job Development & Transportation**

Following receiving approval late last year from the ENRP to pursue a job development and transportation project to enhance the use of public transportation to link people to jobs, the GBNRTC and NFTA have been shepherding this project through our subcommittee. A Proposed Study Work Task was developed and it was agreed that we should choose a pilot site in each county for a short-term pilot. Maps detailing concentrations of potential users have been developed, and based on these and other research a list of potential pilot sites was formulated. The Subcommittee especially looked for commercial areas where employees work the afternoon and night shifts or staggered shifts, and residential areas where car ownership is low.

The long-term goal of this project is to have a working construct to demonstrate the ability to provide public transportation solutions for less traditional job access. This tool could become a part of the economic development process by linking to existing efforts such as WIB training and IDAs. As such, the Subcommittee will work to bring this effort in to the Framework for Regional Growth, the Regional Economic Development

Strategy, and the Economic Development Working Group (One Stop Shop Group).

To that end, the ENRP has voiced its desire to see job development and transportation become a part of the Regional Economic Development Strategy, and have received assurances that a statement on this concept will be included in the draft strategy document.

For the pilot project, the Niagara County choice is the casino-airport-Vantage Park-Summit Park Mall corridor, while in Erie the choice is the airport-Walden Avenue corridor. **The ENRP Transportation Subcommittee recommends that the Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership endorse the aforementioned pilot corridors for the short-term portion of the Job Development & Public Transportation Project.**

#### Federal Transportation Legislation

The federal TEA 21 transportation legislation is up for reauthorization this year. Growth states have been banding together to try to rewrite the funding formula to benefit them, which could hurt states like New York. The package is likely to be \$310 billion over six years; the question is how it will be allocated. At some point ENRP and the two legislatures should take a position on this, but not quite yet. The Subcommittee will keep the membership informed.

#### Niagara Falls International Airport

Windsor Knox from the NFTA gave an update on activity at the Niagara Falls International Airport (NFIA). Kitty Hawk has brought scheduled cargo flights in to the airport. This has created six jobs, and has opened a feeder service to 50 other cities. The next step is to get a European cargo operator to feed into Kitty Hawk. Some property at the airport will be developed for cargo. The recent Veridian project has brought 40 to 80 jobs.

The NFTA is working with the Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation and Canadian officials to link up tourism efforts. They are also working with the Senecas to link to the casino.

Short and long-term renovations to the terminal have been proposed, with some short-term work underway. The NFIA has all the proper equipment in place and is ready to take flights. The airport has seen more activity in the past six months than in the last three years.

Out of the three areas of opportunity listed by the NCIDA in its proposal to operate the NFIA, only repairs are not being pursued. Cargo and charters offer a better, faster return.

#### Other Topics

Other topics discussed included a Niagara County resolution requesting analysis of the future of the Grand Island bridges and/or Grand Island bypass alternatives, and Buffalo-Niagara Falls tourist transportation (please see the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee report).